

**RESTORE ACT  
Public Meeting of April 19, 2016**

**Attendees:** Chris Cowart, School Board Representative, Chairman  
John Meeks, Board of County Commissioners, Vice-Chairman  
David Pieklik, Economic Development Representative  
Jack Schofield, Citizen Representative  
Jolie Davis, Citizen Representative

**Absent:**  
Richard Streeter, Citizen Representative  
Rayanne Giddis, Higher Education  
Leslie Sturmer, Aquaculture  
Vacant, Tourism Industry Representative

Chairman Cowart opened the Committee meeting of the Levy County RESTORE Act Advisory Committee at 3:01 p.m. at the Levy County Court House, Comm. John Meeks said the prayer followed by the Pledge to the Flag. The roll of members was called.

**COMMITTEE**

Mr. Bruce Wilson submitted a recommendation for Gayle Gold to be his replacement for the Tourism Industry Representative. Tisha Whitehurst will submit this recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners for their consideration and approval.

**RESTORE ACT UPDATE**

Mr. Jack Schofield asked how the procedure would work if the County submitted a grant application for RESTORE funds and if it would be a conflict. Comm. Meeks said the County hasn't presented any projects for RESTORE funds but other counties are only funding projects for their county and are not accepting projects from other entities.

Tisha Whitehurst said the Friends of the Withlacoochee Gulf Preserve are withdrawing their project application for a full time position and only have the educational displays submitted. Ms. Whitehurst said Cedar Key combined their project applications.

Ms. Whitehurst presented the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Settlement Fact Sheet and a summary of the Consent Decree. Ms. Whitehurst said the Consent Order was available online. Ms. Whitehurst said the first payment is due in April, 2017.

Comm. John Meeks said the Consortium will hold a staff level meeting on Thursday, April 21.

Ms. Whitehurst reported that Mr. John Stutz with the Treasury Department had requested conflict of interest forms which have been secured from the appropriate parties and with final review the County should receive a letter with no stipulations and allow the award of the planning assistance money.

**PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

**PROJECT ACE (Santa Fe College):** Ms. Heidi Lennon of Santa Fe College

presented a power point presentation reviewing their proposed proposal of a joint project with the University of Florida Ambassadors for Conservation Education at Seahorse Key. Ms. Lennon reviewed the planned eight open houses each year with the objective of two years of funding. Ms. Lennon said the proposal would allow the experience of marine resources within the County and would be subsidized with refreshments supplied by local vendors and boat captains for transportation to Seahorse Key. Ms. Lennon explained the results of the surveys obtained at previous open houses that consisted of 30% of the visitors from outside the State and 57% from Florida. Ms. Lennon said there were very few youth and no local residents from the County. Ms. Lennon said the proposed focus will be on youth participation with a high school access day. Ms. Lennon said Seahorse Key is a biological property to use as a staging ground. Ms. Lennon said there has been a marine lab on Seahorse Key since 1954 and additional funding would allow building more science and education facilities for all ages. Ms. Lennon said the proposed budget includes open houses, advertising, funding for transportation, fuel, clean up. Ms. Lennon said they revised the capital improvement project for the pavilion, reduced the number of kayaks. Ms. Lennon said the project funding as reduced from \$237,000 to just under \$200,000 for year one and \$149,000 to \$134,000 for year two.

Ms. Jolie Davis inquired if funding had been sought from other sources.

Ms Jessica Long said they had applied for a grant with the Honda Association but did not receive it, but they were able to purchase some kayaks. Ms. Long said there is an existing pavilion which would be reconfigured into a welcome exchange and they would like to building an additional pavilion with touch tanks. They currently have a small classroom with an overhead projector and microscopes donated about 15 years ago. Ms. Long said more needs to be done in the classroom and at the house for more visitors.

In response to a question from Ms. Davis, Ms. Long said they recently had an anonymous donation of a Carolina skiff outfitted for these type of visits for an open house.

Mr. David Pieklik inquired into any plans for local representation participating such as local ideas and suggestions, and using local restaurants in their plan.

Ms. Long said they would engage local teachers, families and outreach to the schools, local laundry mats, grocery stores, etc.

Ms. Maria Sgambati with the University of Florida said approximately 20 teachers already utilize the facilities so that is a network with the Levy County School system.

Mr. Jack Schofield inquired what would happen to the proposal if their project was not funded.

Ms. Long said they would continue to work on funding and would adjust their budget more.

Chairman Cowart requested that a copy of the power point be sent to Ms. Whitehurst electronically.

CITY OF CEDAR KEY: Mr. Royce Nelson explained that the 8 original applications had

been reduced to 3 with the inner marina being the priority. Mr. Nelson explained the inner marina is the most important project due to its use by fishermen, tourists and boaters. Mr. Nelson said the dredging and dock improvements would be a public/private collaboration if funds were received from the Pot 1 funds. Mr. Nelson explained that the project had already be evaluated and without the dredging in the marina it is limiting the use by boats. Mr. Nelson said the City of Cedar Key is looking at contributing \$50,000 to the project and is proposing \$100,000 from RESTORE Act Pot 1 funds. Mr. Nelson said the City is looking at the canal dredge as the initial and most important project in the prioritization of the projects and the limitation of funds available.

Mr. Schofield said he would like a plan for the request of \$785,000 over the next five years on how the projects would be completed.

In response to an inquiry by Comm. Meeks, Mr. Nelson said the replacement of the bridge will help at high tide and dredging the canal would allow vessels to access the marina at low tide and that would increase use of the marina and a rental income to the city.

Comm. Meeks asked if the sand being removed from the canal area could be used as beach renourishment. Ms. Davis said that would kill the clamming industry and that the spoil from the dredging would need to be placed offsite.

WITHLACOOCHEE GULF PRESERVE EDUCATIONAL DISPLAYS (Friends of Withlacoochee Gulf Preserve): Ms. Ellen Klee, President of the Friends of the Withlacoochee Gulf Preserve presented a power point presentation outlining the facility and upgrades which have been made. Ms. Klee said the original project application requested \$43,000 for with the focus on displays inside the educational building. Ms. Klee explained the proposed project budget has been adjusted to \$23,000 which would be used to purchase full screen t.v. monitors, software for a click and identify plants, microscopes and some furniture and kayaks. The kayaks will be used by students to retrieve samples and scientific measurements for various educational projects. Ms. Klee said students from Yankeetown School assisted in building the original trails, kiosks and gardens and that University of Florida is currently studying sea level rise and the effects on plant, animal and aquatic populations. Ms. Klee said the Friends have raised over \$28,000 for upgrading the education center, secured grants through the Felburn Foundation and received assistance from Southwest Florida Water Management District for signage on the nature trails. Ms. Klee explained by having equipment available students will not have to haul sampling gathering equipment as it will be available at the center. Ms. Klee said \$3,000 of the \$23,000 is budgeted for maintenance and replacement of equipment.

LOWER WITHLACOOCHEE RIVER ENVIRONMENTAL & RESTORATION STUDY (W.A.R., Inc.): Mr. Dan Hilliard said they were currently six months into sampling of Phase 2 with the project being on time and on budget. Mr. Hilliard said they are still applying for grants and are not certain if the local communities will include any funding in next year's budget for the project. Mr. Hilliard said with two years remaining in the project the funding needed would be \$34,000 per year. Mr. Hilliard explained that the sampling area has been expanded further upstream based on data received. Mr. Hilliard said a funding request reduction would be submitted with a request of \$85,000. Mr. Hilliard said they are currently getting in-kind services from Southwest Florida Water Management District and the Department of Environmental Protection. Mr. Hilliard explained there is 1 ½ years of data

collection and then recommendations will be made for restoration on the river.

CEDAR KEY WASTEWATER IMPROVEMENT (Cedar Key Sewer & Water District): Ms. Whitehurst explained the applicant was unable to attend to make a presentation but she read Mr. McPherson's email explaining the project to move the pipes from the three bridges needed to be done at one time as costs would increase if done separately. Ms. Whitehurst said Mr. McPherson referenced \$6,000 but she believes the amount should be \$86,000.

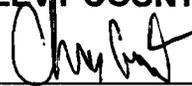
### **MEETING SCHEDULE**

The next meeting of the RESTORE Act Advisory Committee will be May 17, 2016, commencing at 3:00 p.m. in the Board of County Commissioner's meeting room at the Levy County Court House.

### **MINUTES**

Ms. Davis moved to approve the minutes of March 8, 2016, seconded by Mr. Pieklik and the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

**RESTORE ACT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
LEVY COUNTY, FLORIDA**



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Chris Cowart, Chairman